

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00018 01 OF 03 071803Z

44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 071455Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7988

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 COTONOU 0018

EO 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: PRES KEREKOU'S NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION

REF COTONOU 10,

SUMMARY: IN HIS NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION, PRES KEREKOU SAID THAT IN 1976 THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF BENIN WOULD CONCENTRATE ON ORGANIZING THE POPULATION (YOUTH, WOMEN TRADE UNIONS, SECURITY FORCES AND PEASANTS) AND COMPLETE LIQUIDATION OF "COLONIAL AND NEO-COLONIAL" ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO JUSTICE, FINANCE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00018 01 OF 03 071803Z

AND LABOR. ALL UNITS OF PRODUCTION WILL BE REVOLUTIONIZED, SO

THAT URBAN PROLETARIAT CAN TAKE OVER THEIR DIRECTION. BOURGEOIS MANAGEMENT METHODS WILL BE ABOLISHED. THE FIRST TEST OF A MANAGER WILL BE HIS REVOLUTIONARY ZEAL. THERE WILL BE A DRIVE FOR INCREASED PRODUCTION. VIRTUALLY ALL FAMILIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENGAGE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND APPARENTLY THEY WILL BE TOLD WHAT CROPS AND LIVESTOCK TO RAISE. "BLOODY-HANDED" AND INFLATION-GENERATING INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM AND "ITS LOCAL STOOGES THE FEUDALISTS AND THE REACTIONARY POLITICO-BUREAUCRATIC BOURGEOISIE" WILL BE CRUSHED WITHOUT PITY. THERE WILL BE A PAY RAISE FOR CLERICAL AND BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC SECTORS, BUT NOT FOR ANYBODY ELSE. KEREKOU'S ADDRESS CONFIRMS OTHER INDICATIONS THAT HIS REGIME IS AIMING AT COMPLETE COMMUNIZATION, DOWN TO THE LAST PEASANT AND FARM ANIMAL. THE BLUEPRINT LOOKS NORTH KOREAN. WHILE THE DOMINANT THEME ADVERTISED IN THE GOVT MEDIA FOR 1976 IS INCREASED PRODUCTION, WE BELIEVE THE OVER-RIDING OBJECTIVE IS CONTROL OF POPULATION. WE WOULD EXPECT REGIME TO EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTIES IN LEASHING THE PEASANTRY. IN OUR OPINION 1976 IN PRB WILL BE A YEAR OF INTENSIVE PARTY AND POLICE ACTIVITY, PAINFUL SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, CONTINUED DECLINE IN ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND INCREASING CONFRONTATION WITH THE PRB'S NEIGHBORS AND ITS MAJOR DONORS THE WESTERN POWERS, WHO IN THE PAST HAVE KEPT THE COUNTRY AFLOAT AND WHOSE AID IS INDISPENSABLE TO THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM HERE. FROM USG POINT OF VIEW, OVERALL OUTLOOK FOR BENIN IS DISMAL. END SUMMARY.

1. PRES KEREKOU BEGAN HIS NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY EXPRESSING SATISFACTION THAT IN ONLY ONE YEAR HIS GOVT HAD GONE A LONG WAY TOWARD ACHIEVING ITS MAJOR 1975 OBJECTIVES OF A) UNIFYING THE THINKING OF THE POPULATION ON THE BASIS OF MARXIST-LENINISM, B) PRODUCING ENOUGH FOR NEEDS OF POPULATION AND BUILDING RESERVES, AND C) REVOLUTIONIZING ALL THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE. MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS ALSO INCLUDED NATIONALIZING THE PRINCIPAL MEANS OF PRODUCTION, ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, AND FOUNDATION OF A VANGUARD REVOLUTIONARY PARTY. THEY MUST ALL BE SEEN AS STEPS IN THE "SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKING PEOPLE." NONETHELESS, KEREKOU WARNED, THERE WERE STILL UNLIQUIDATED ENEMIES OF THE REGIME INSIDE AND OUTSIDE BENIN WHO STILL HAD TO BE DEALT

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 COTONO 00018 01 OF 03 071803Z

WITH.

2. KEREKOU DECLARED THAT 1976 WILL BE DECISIVE. IT WILL BE THE YEAR IN WHICH THE PARTY WILL BE DEVELOPED AND STRENGTHENED. THE FOLLOWING MASS ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE BUILD UP, ALL WITH ASSIGNED REVOLUTIONARY TASKS: (A) YOUTH OF EVERY AGE, (B) WOMEN, (C) TRADE UNIONS, (D) SECURITY FORCES, INCLUDING THE "COMMITTEES FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTION" ALREADY LOCATED

IN EVERY GOVT AGENCY AND EVERY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
(THEY ARE CONSIDERED INFORMERS AND VIGILANTE SECURITY FORCES
IN SUPPORT OF ARMY, GENDARMERIE AND POLICE), AND (E) PEASANTS,
THROUGH PEASANT UNIONS.

3. AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THERE WILL BE A "COMPLETE LIQUIDATION OF
REMAINING COLONIAL AND NEO-COLONIAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES,
PARTICULARLY THOSE RELATING TO JUSTICE, FINANCE AND LABOR."

4. MANAGEMENT OF ALL UNITS OF PRODUCTION WILL BE REVOLUTIONIZED,
SO THAT THE URBAN PROLETARIAT CAN PROGRESSIVELY TAKE OVER THE
DIRECTION OF ALL OF THEM. PRODUCTION PROGRAMS WILL BE ACCOM-
PLISHED "CORRECTLY". BOURGEOIS MANAGEMENT METHODS WILL BE
JUNKED. BUREAUCRACY WILL BE ABOLISHED. HERE KEREKOU CONCEDED
THAT REVOLUTIONARY MANAGERS ALREADY INSTALLED HAD BEEN UNABLE
AS YET TO CLEAR UP THE MESS ALLEGEDLY CREATED BY COLONIALISM.
THE FIRST PREREQUISITE OF A MANAGER IS THAT HE MUST BE
PATRIOTIC AND CONSCIENTIOUS (I.E., A REVOLUTIONARY).

5. KEREKOU MADE A "PARTIOTIC APPEAL" FOR INCREASED PRODUCTION,
THROUGH PLANNED "SCIENTIFIC" ACTIVITY AND PRIORITIES, SO AS TO
ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY AS WELL AS SET UP FOOD RESERVES IN
SILOS. CACAO AND COFFEE (WHICH ARE NOT NOW GROWN
IN BENIN) ARE AMONG THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS LISTED FOR
INCREASES IN PRODUCTION.

6. THE FOLLOWING WILL BE THE "PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCTION":
(A) EVERY PEASNT FAMILY MUST DEVOTE ITS LABORS MAINLY TO THE
CULTIVATION OF TWO SUBSISTENCE FOOD PRODUCTS FOR ITS USE AS WELL
AS ONE ADDITIONAL PRODUCT FOR LOCAL INDUSTRIAL PROCESSING
OR EXPORTATION. ALL MUST RAISE POULTRY AND EITHER PIGS OR
GOATS. (B) THE PUPILS OF EVERY SCHOOL MUST PRODUCE FOOD WORTH
AT LEAST 20 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOL'S ANNUAL BUDGET. (C) EVERY
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 COTONO 00018 01 OF 03 071803Z

COMPANY (PUBLIC OR PRIVATE), STATE AGENCY AND SECURITY FORCES
GARRISON MUST MAINTAIN A FARM ON WHICH EVERY EMPLOYEE MUST WORK
ON A PARCEL ASSIGNED TO HIM. (D) EVERY DISTRICT MUST HAVE A
STATE FARM ON WHICH THE BEST TECHNIQUES OF CULTIVATION ARE
APPLIED.
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CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00018 02 OF 03 071812Z

44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 COTONOU 0018

(E) THE FOOD CROPS ARE TO BE PRINCIPALLY THE FOLLOWING:
RICE, MAIZE, SORGHUM AND VEGETABLES. (F) EVERY PROVINCE MUST
HAVE A STATE FARM FOR POULTRY, RABBITS AND PIGS.

7. THE PLANNING FOR THE ABOVE WILL BE DONE "SCIENTIFICALLY"
BY THE POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF BENIN.

8. IN THE LIGHT OF THE "INVINCIBLE" PRINCIPLES OF MARXIST-
LENINISM, THE PRB WILL, THROUGH CLASS WAR, LIQUIDATE COM-
PLETELY, THROUGHOUT THE NATIONAL TERRITORY, "BLOODY-HANDED
INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM" AS WELL AS "ITS LOCAL STOOGES
THE FEUDALISTS AND THE REACTIONARY "PETITE BOURGEOISIE POLITICO-
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PAGE 02 COTONO 00018 02 OF 03 071812Z

BUREAUCRATIQUE". "WE WILL CRUSH OUR ENEMIES WITHOUT PITY."
INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR "THE HATEFUL
SYSTEM OF GALLOPING INFLATION" AND SPECULATION.

9. THE FOLLOWING "SOCIAL MEASURES" WILL BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY:

(A) PAY RAISE OF 14 PERCENT FOR CLERICAL AND BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC SECTORS COVERED BY THE "COLLECTIVE CONVENTION" (NO RAISE FOR ANY SALARIED "FONCTIONNAIRES"). (B) SINCE JAN 1973 PAY INCREASES BY PROMOTION FOR THE ABOVE CATEGORIES OF PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO 50 PERCENT OF THE AMOUNTS PRESCRIBED IN THE ESTABLISHED PAY SCALE. THE REMAINING 50 PERCENT IS NOW AWARDED TO THOSE EMPLOYEES.

10. "IN EVERY DOMAIN THE RED STAR OF BENIN SHINES BRIGHTLY. IMMORTAL GLORY TO THE PRB*"

11. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE SUPREME OBJECTIVE OF KEREKOU'S PROGRAM FOR 1976 BILLED BY THE MEDIA IS INCREASED PRODUCTION, WE BELIEVE THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE IS TO CONTROL THE POPULATION. KEREKOU APPEARS DETERMINED TO ORGANIZE EVERY LIVING THING, RIGHT DOWN TO THE LOWEST PEASANT AND FARM ANIMAL. THE BLUEPRINT LOOKS REMARKABLY NORTH KOREAN IN CHARACTER. LIKE OTHER INDICATORS, IT APPEARS TO FORESHADOW COMPLETE COMMUNIZATION.

12. THE 1976 PROGRAM IS AMBITIOUS TO SAY THE LEAST. AS AN IMMEDIATE GOAL IT WILL ATTEMPT TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE WEB OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRACTICES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED HERE OVER THE PAST SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS.

13. ON THE OTHER HAND ONE MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE WHAT THE POLICE AND PROPAGANDA CAN DO. FOLLOWING THE SPONTANEOUS POPULAR INSURRECTION IN COTONOU AND SEVERAL OTHER CITIES IN JUNE 75, IT TOOK THIS REGIME ONLY FIVE MONTHS TO IMPOSE ON THIS LARGELY FREE SOCIETY A PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, A SINGLE MARXIST PARTY, A POLICE TYRANNY, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE MARCHING IN STEP THROUGH THE CAPITAL (COTONOU 1818 DATED 30 NOV) AND A CONSTANT AND FRENZIED CHORUS OF REVOLUTIONARY SONGS AND SLOGANS IN EVERY SCHOOL AND VILLAGE IN THE COUNTRY.) THE INTENSIVE AND SUSTAINED PARTY AND POLICE ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00018 02 OF 03 071812Z

BENIN IS INDEED IMPRESSIVE.

14. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS EASIER TO REGIMENT CONCENTRATED URBAN POPULATIONS THAN DISPERSED RURAL FOLK. EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE HAS DEMONSTRATED ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION THAT PEASANTS TEND ACIOUSLY RESIST REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES THAT THEY HAVE NOT DEMANDED, PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE IMPOSED BY OUTSIDERS, E.G., DOCTRINAIRE TOWN FOLKS FROM OTHER TRIBES SPEAKING STRANGE LANGUAGES. WE WOULD EXPECT TROUBLES IN APPLYING KEREKOU'S PROGRAM TO THE PEASANTRY.

15. KEREKOU'S ADDRESS ONCE AGAIN MAKES CLEAR THAT ALL BUT THE FOLLOWING CLASSES WILL BE WIPED OUT: THE SECURITY FORCES, THE CLERICAL AND BLUE-COLLAR STATE EMPLOYEES, THE URBAN WORKING CLASS, THE PEASANTRY, SOME ARTISANS AND "PATRIOTIC INTELLECTUALS". THEY ARE TO BE THE BULWARKS AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. RECENT FURTHER PURGES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE, IN THE MANAGEMENT LEVEL OF STATE ENTERPRISES, AND IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES (REPLACING THE OLD COUNCILS) DOWN TO THE DISTRICT LEVEL HAVE ALREADY ELIMINATED CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS OF THE OLD URBAN "LIBERAL" AND RURAL "FEUDAL" ELITES FROM THEIR POSITIONS OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY. A GREAT MANY OTHERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED OR HAVE FLED THE COUNTRY. EXPROPRIATIONS OF THE PROPERTY OF MEMBERS OF THESE ELITES IS WELL UNDER WAY. PARTY-SPONSORED PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT SEMINARS ARE CURRENTLY BEING HELD TO EXPLAIN TO THE SO-CALLED "COMMANDING ELEMENTS" OF THE NEW SOCIETY (THOSE IN MILITARY, POLICE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PARTY AUTHORITY) HOW MEMBERS OF THE OLD CLASSES CAN BE "WIPED OUT." THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE ANY OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF THIS CAMPAIGN.

16. IN PAY RAISES, WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR THE REVOLUTION, APPLY ONLY TO THE CATEGORIES OF PERSONNEL WHOM THE REGIME SEES AS ITS ALLIES (IT HAS BEEN CLEAR FOR SOME TIME THAT THE PRESENT CLASSES OF "PROFESSIONAL" CIVIL SERVANTS AND "PROFESSIONAL LEVEL" PERSONNEL IN THE SEMI-PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS ARE NOT TO BE BENEFICIARIES OF THE NEW STATE; THOSE WHO DO NOT ACCEPT THE REVOLUTION THOROUGHLY AND "PROLETARIANIZE" THEMSELVES WILL BE "LIQUIDATED." THE LAST ROUND OF PAY RAISES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS OCCURRED IN 1969).

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COTONO 00018 02 OF 03 071812Z

17. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THERE ARE ENOUGH TRAINED MARXIST PERSONNEL YET IN BENIN TO CONCEIVE AND MANAGE ADMINISTRATIVE, PROGRAMMATIC AND PARTY UNDERTAKINGS OF THE SCALE AND VELOCITY WE ARE NOT WITNESSING. SINCE THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE OF CHICOM ACTIVITY IN THIS FIELD, AND THE SOVIET EFFORT HERE SEEMS MAINLY CONFINED TO MEDIA PROPAGANDA AND INTELLIGENCE, WE SUSPECT THAT THE NORTH KOREANS, WHO ARE LAVISHLY PRAISED BY THE KEREKOU REGIME, ARE PLAYING A SIGNIFICANT ARCHITECTURAL ROLE IN THE NEW STATE. THERE ARE PLENTY OF THEM AROUND. IN FACT, THERE IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY HAS A POOL OF ADVISORS AVAILABLE ON CALL TO THE GOVT MINISTRIES AND THE PARTY. NOT A LITTLE PRB PARTY PROPAGANDA HAS A NORTH KOREAN RING. IN READING KEREKOU'S NEW YEAR ADDRESS, IT STRIKES US THAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE NORTH KOREANS WHO DID NOT REALIZE THAT BENIN DOES NOT PRODUCE COFFEE OR CACAO, THOUGHT IT EXPORTS.

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PAGE 01 COTONO 00018 03 OF 03 071823Z

44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 071455Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7990

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 COTONOU 0018

18. IN PRINCIPLE A NATIONAL EFFORT TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION IN BENIN IS COMMENDABLE BECAUSE THE COUNTRY IS IN DEFICIT. IT IS QUESTIONABLE HOWEVER WHETHER THE METHODS CHOSEN BY THE KEREKOU REGIME WILL SUBSTANTIALLY AUGMENT EFFECTIVE OUTPUT. NOTHING HAS COME TO LIGHT AS YET REGARDING ANY PLANS TO EXPAND STORAGE FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY OR TO DEVELOP ADEQUATE MARKETING SYSTEMS, WHICH ARE VITAL TO ANY SOLUTION OF BENIN'S FOOD PROBLEMS. WITHOUT THEM SURPLUSES WILL ROT. THE EXPERIENCE THUS FAR UNDER THE KEREKOU REGIME IS THAT EACH YEAR THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY WORSENS. THE REGIME'S RECORD IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IS POOR. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE NATIONALIZED ENTERPRISES ARE IN A STATE OF CHAOS, BECAUSE OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00018 03 OF 03 071823Z

MISMANAGEMENT AND IDEOLOGICAL OBJECTIONS TO THE APPLICATION OF ESTABLISHED "CAPITALIST" BUSINESS METHODS. UNDER KEREKOU'S 1976 PROGRAM THERE IS EVERY REASON TO EXPECT INCREASED ANARCHY IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY.

19. IN OUR OPINION (SHARED BY THE FRENCH AND WEST GERMAN AMBASSADORS), 1976 IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN WILL BE A YEAR OF INTENSIVE PARTY AND POLICE ACTIVITY, PAINFUL SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, FURTHER RAPID EROSION OF THE PREVIOUSLY DOMINANT CLASSES INCLUDING THE BULK OF THE BEST TRAINED ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIETY, CONTINUED DECLINE IN ECONOMIC VIABILITY, AND INCREASING CONFRONTATION WITH BENIN'S NEIGHBORS AND ITS MAJOR DONORS THE WESTERN POWERS, ABOVE ALL THE UNITED STATES, AS THE KEREKOU REGIME SEEKS TO IMPOSE ITS NEWLY DISCOVERED CONCEPTIONS AND ITS VIRILITY ON ITS OWN PEOPLE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD. IF PRESENT TRENDS CONTINUE THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY COULD BE AS DISMAL AS THAT OF GUINEA. GUINEA IN FACT MAY PROVE TO BE BETTER OFF BECAUSE IT AT LEAST HAS SOME RESOURCES (MINERALS) THAT CAN BE SOLD FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE. BENIN HAS PRACTICALLY NONE. AT THE RATE THE PRB IS GOING, IT WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE OF AN INTERNATIONAL BASKET CASE, DEPENDENT UPON THE CONTINUED WILLINGNESS OF WESTERN DONOR GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DONOR INSTITUTIONS TO ACCEPT IS PRETENSIONS AND INSULTS. SINCE THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE PRB WILL RECEIVE SUBSTANTIVE ASSISTANCE IN ANY SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT FROM ANY OF ITS COMMUNIST FRIENDS (WHO ALREADY GET WHAT THEY WANT FROM BENIN FOR LITTLE OR NOTHING AND CAN THEREFORE SAVE THEIR FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR USE IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES NOT YET IN THE PRO-COMMUNIST CAMP), CONTINUED AID FROM BENIN'S TRADITIONAL DONORS IS INDISPENSABLE TO THE BUILDING OF "SOCIALISM" HERE. END COMMENT.
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